IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1-26 (canceled)

27.(new) A method for rendering an image having densities by using halftone dots having a number, an area and a color, the method comprising:

in a first density range from D0 to D1 (D1>D0), modulating density by varying a number of halftone dots having a first color and having a first fixed area;

in a second density range from D1 to D2 (D2>D1), modulating density by varying a size of a fixed number of halftone dots having said first color from said first area to a second area larger than said first area;

in a third density range from D2 to D3 (D3>D2), modulating density by varying the number of halftone dots having said first color and having said second fixed area.

28. (new) The method according to claim 27 whereby at said density level D3 spaces are left corresponding with halftone dots having a second color and having the second area, the method further comprising:

in a fourth density range from D3 to D4 (D4>D3), modulating density by varying the area of a fixed number of halftone dots having the second color from the second area to the first area; and

in a fifth density range from D4 to D5 (D5>D4), modulating density by varying the number of halftone dots having the second color and having the first area.

29.(new)A method for generating a threshold mask array having threshold values for generating halftone dots having an area, a

number and a first or a second color to render an image having
densities comprising:

   subdividing the threshold mask array into a plurality of
parcels wherein each of the parcels includes a parcel area;

   assigning threshold values to the threshold mask for modulating
density in a first range from D0 to D1 (D1>D0) by varying a
number of halftone dots having the first color and having a
first fixed dot area smaller than the parcel area, wherein each
halftone dot is entirely contained within said parcel;

   assigning threshold values to the threshold mask for modulating
density in a second range from D1 to D2 (D2>D1) by varying an
area of a fixed number of halftone dots having the first color
from the first area to a second area corresponding to a parcel;
and

   assigning threshold values to the threshold mask for modulating
density in a third range from D2 to D3 (D3>D2) by varying a
number of halftone dots having a fixed second area.

30.(new) The method according to claim 29 whereby at the density
level D3 spaces are left corresponding with halftone dots having the
second color and having the second area, further comprising:

 assigning threshold values to the threshold mask for modulating
density in a fourth range from D3 to D4 (D4>D1) by varying the area
of a fixed number of halftone dots having the second color from the
second area corresponding to a parcel to the first area; and

 assigning threshold values to the threshold mask for modulating
density in a fifth range from D4 to D5 (D5>D4) by varying the number
of halftone dots having the second color and having the first fixed
dot area, wherein each halftone dot is entirely contained within a
parcel.

31.(new) The method according to claim 27 wherein said image is
rendered on a printing plate.

32.(new) The method according to claim 28 wherein said image is rendered on a printing plate.

33.(new) A data processing system comprising means for carrying out the steps of the method according to claim 27.

34.(new) A data processing system comprising means for carrying out the steps of the method according to claim 28.

35.(new) A computer readable medium comprising computer code for carrying out the method according to the claim 27, when said computer code is executed on a data processing system.

36.(new) A computer readable medium comprising computer code for carrying out the method according to the claim 28, when said computer code is executed on a data processing system.